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ABSTRACT

This document proposes integrating multi-ethnic education and reading education in order to reach their combined basic goals, ethnic literacy and pluralistic socialization. Three guidelines are offered to assist in this integration process. First, reading materials and instruction should reflect the ethnic diversity of the United States. This goal requires reading materials permeated with multi-ethnic themes and experiences, and instruction that accommodates the different cognitive styles of minority students. Second, reading instruction and materials should exhibit the linguistic diversity of the United States; standard English should be taught as an alternative dialect necessary for communication in this country. Finally, reading teachers should be cognizant of their personal biases toward ethnic minority students. The report concludes with a list of basic multi-ethnic resources for reading and language arts teachers. (MAI)

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Multiethnic Dimensions of Reading

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Multiethnic education and reading education should be integrated. They have much in common. Both endeavor to prepare students to live and work harmoniously in our diverse, technological society. Their advocates consider the skills, knowledge and attitudes imparted by both basic for survival. I believe, for example, that multiethnic education is the fourth basic "R" of 'Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic, the multiethnic "R" representing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to respect and relate to those ethnically-different than oneself. Yet, while multiethnic and reading education espouse similar goals, they often function as separate thrusts. All too often, they function as disparate thrusts. This paper discusses integration of multiethnic and reading education, proposes three multiethnic dimensions effectuated by integration, and provides a list of basic multiethnic resources for reading and language arts teachers.

Integration of Reading and Multiethnic Education

Literacy is an essential goal of reading education. Preparing students to speak, write, and read well enough to survive in our literate society is essential. Preparing students to work productively and live harmoniously in our diverse, technological society is also essential. Thus,reading has been used to instill students with prevailing moral and political values during different periods of American history (Robinson, 1977). During the early colonial period, readers in New England were taught religious precepts such as in The New England's Primer:

> In Adam's Fall
> We Sinned All . . . .
>
> Thy Life to Mend
> This Book Attend.

After the War of Independence, reading materials became less religious and more nationalistic, emphasizing loyality to the new country.

Reading materials during the decades of the 1940's and 1950's emphasized family and child development, spawning series of basal readers portraying the lifestyle of the White, middle class family. In the middle 1960's and early 1970's the faces of some textbook characters were darkened and some stereotypes were removed. The language, lifestyle, and the relationships portrayed in the materials remained basically unchanged. The emphasis was attached as racist and sexist (Zimet, 1976), and the much maligned "Dick, Jane and Spot" soon tumbled from their status as elementary folk heroes.

Literacy and socialization are basic goals of multiethnic education. Multiethnic education counters racism in schools by attempting to dilute its potent effect upon minority and majority group students alike. Curricular racism--administrative policies, academic programs, and teaching practices that perpetrate White supremacy over ethnic minorities--prevents minority students from benefiting equally from school opportunities. Indicators of school success, especially reading test scores, consistently place minority students at a lower achievement level than White students (Rivilin, 1977; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972). Further,White suburban students, isolated from social interaction with minorities, often times develop distorted perceptions about minorities; the perceptions are reenforced by White dominated school curricula (Miel and Kiester, 1973).

Multiethnic education prepares students to live harmoniously in a multi-ethnic society via a school socialization process that 1) reflects in curricula the ethnic diversity of American society, 2) deals directly with ethnic group differences and similarities, 3) provides students experiences and opportunities

to understand their individual and group uniqueness in our pluralistic milieu. The anticipated outcomes of multiethnic education are "ethnic literacy", i.e., diminuation of racism and group prejudices, and the concomitant enhancement of human empathy, self-respect, and respect for others (Banks, 1975).

Integration of multiethnic and reading education would require changing the scope of the "literacy" and "socialization" goals to "ethnic literacy" and "pluralistic socialization." (See Figure 1.)

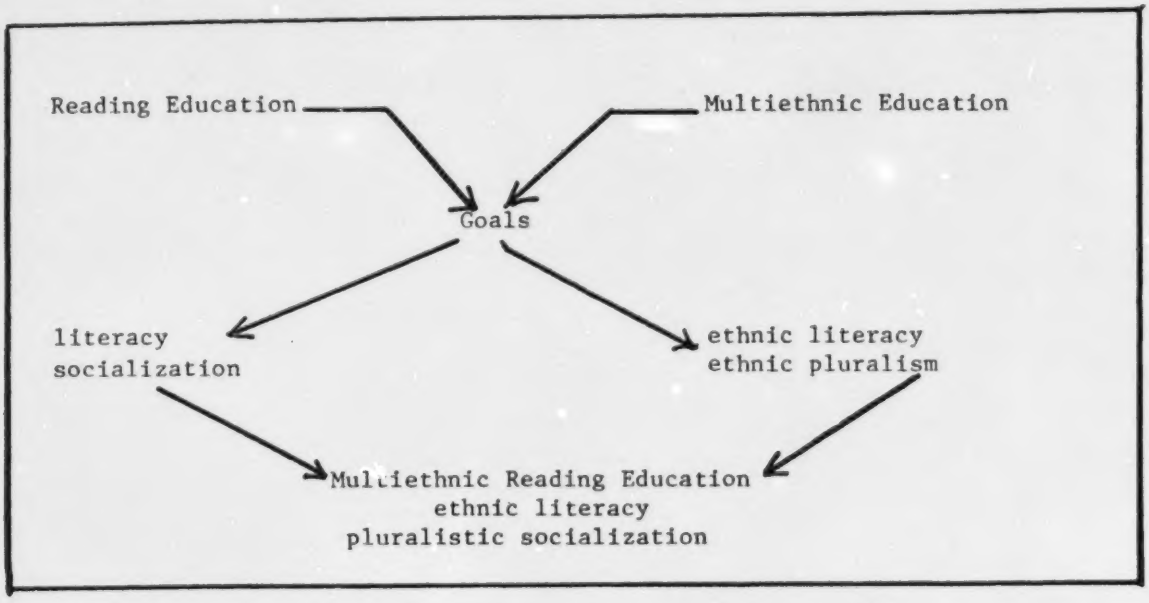

Figure 1. Integration of Multiethnic and Reading Education

Integration would not lower reading standards. Students would be taught requisite reading skills, but these skills would be taught through multiethnic content and experiences, thereby providing minority and majority group students reading skills concurrent with cultural understandings.

Multiethnic Dimension of Reading Instruction

Studies on the ethnic content of children's literature and reading programs report that ethnic minorities are disproportionately underrepresented. When they are included in programs, many of the characters and situations are stereotypic or superficial (Yee, 1973; Blatt, 1968). Studies comparing the ethnicity of characters in reading texts with the ethnic identities of the students using them report that White characters dominate the texts as main and incidental characters irrespective of the ethnic group affilitation of the readers (McKay, 1971; Winham, 1975). It is clear that ethnic minority experiences in reading materials are misrepresented or underrepresented. The following guides are offered to assist with integration of multiethnic and reading education:

1. Reading materials and instruction should reflect the ethnic diversity existent in the United States.

This dimension requires permeation of reading instruction and materials with multiethnic themes and experiences. The intent is to expose all students to the cultures of Asian-, Black-, Native-, and Spanish-speaking Americans. It is not satisfactory to simply add ethnic lessons to an already crowded secondary reading program, nor is it satisfactory to add a few minor characters to represent minority people to the children's literature of an elementary program. The additive approach--adding a few token lessons in minority historical events, persons, or cultural contributions--perpetuates the notion that minorities

are not an integral part of society. Thus, two questions should be directed at the ethnic characteristics of reading materials: 1) Is the content permeated with multiethnic themes and concepts? 2) What images are evoked by the content's themes and concepts? For example, what image of Chinese Americans is evoked in reading materials? If students learn nothing about the courage, resourcefulness, and the endurance of Chinese Americans, then students will rely on stereotypic images learned outside of school. Chinese American students may internalize the image as appropriate for their self-concepts and adapt their classroom behavior to fit the stereotype (Chang, 1975). Yet, stories such as Laurence Yep's Child of the Owl non-stereotypically portrays the experiences of a twelve year old Chinese American girl, her impression of life in suburbia and Chinatown. Or, Richard Erdoes' The Sound of Flutes and Other Indian Legends presents Native American Cheyenne, Sioux, and Crow legends as told by the story tellers. This original folklore, Native American words and names are used when appropriate, portrays Native Americans with dignity and beauty. These types of stories can be utilized to provide all students a rich and genuine experience with ethnic peoples.

Key to reading motivation of students, minority and nonminority students alike, is identification with the themes and characters within reading materials. (John and Berney, 1968; Zimet and Camp, 1974). Differing family patterns, e.g., single parent families, extended families, matriarachal families, should be portrayed. Also, key to sustaining interest in reading materials are follow-up discussions conducted with students. For example, the story of Graciela is about a young Mexican American girl who lives in an extended family. Graciela learns to share her things with all members of the family. Sharing becomes

critical to the family's maintenance. After reading the story, students should be encouraged to discuss the different feelings they have about sharing personal property. Are they encouraged to share? Do they share with grandparents? Do grandparents or god-parents live in their homes? Students learn as part of their comprehension exercises something about minority cultures, enriching their lives with positive experiences about minority peoples. In "Multiethnic Literature, Promise and Problems," Jenkins (73) provides goals for a multi-ethnic reading program. The program helps minority children understand they have a cultural heritage of which they can be proud. It can also help majority group children understand that similarities as well as differences exist between groups.

Reading instruction should also accommodate the differing cognitive and learning styles of students. Studies on youngsters reared in extended families where cooperation was valued higher than competition report that these youngsters (Jews, Italians, Mexican Americans) exhibited a field-dependent cognitive style (Castañeda, Ramirez, 1974). The field-dependent cognitive style, according to the studies, is contrary to the field independent style required by most learning activities in schools. While the research on cognitive styles of minority students is in its infancy, experience shows that minority students do orient themselves differently than majority group students with learning activities and tasks. Small group work with emphasis on cooperation rather than competition, individualization of reading program, and peer-tutoring can have a positive effect upon the reading motivation of ethnic minority students.

2. Reading instruction and materials should exhibit the linguistic diversity existent in the United States.

Traditionally, students who spoke a non-standard dialect or spoke a foreign language were prohibited or discouraged from using their dialect or language. In recent years, bilingual education legislation, the Lau v. Nichols Supreme Court decision, and professional education organizations have endorsed policies of lingusistic pluralism. The National Council of Teachers of English has issued a policy statement supporting the student's right to speak a non-standard language or dialect. The International Reading Association has published articles and texts which advocate retention of non-standard dialects.

Linguistic ethnocentrism--the attitude one's dialect is inherently superior to other languages and dialects--is the heart of the problem. Studies on teachers' attitudes toward the dialects spoken by Mexican Americans and urban Black students indicate that the teacher's negative attitudes toward the dialects are of greater importance than other cognitive factors for producing low reading performance, i.e., teachers generally view non-standard dialects as sub-standard and deficient, and therefore inferior to standard English (Seitz, 1977). This attitude, when felt by the non-standard speaker, would have a negative impact on the student's expectations and motivation to read. To counter standard-English ethnocentrism, a student's dialect should be incorporated into reading materials. Or, students should be encouraged to read standard English using their preferred articulation and pronunciation. Speakers of standard English should be encouraged to learn another dialect whenever possible. Standard English should be taught as an alternate dialect

necessary for communication in American life. It should not be taught as a dialect to replace the student's dialect, i.e. a bi-dilectal approach is proposed that would allow students to retain with pride their preferred dialects while learning to read standard English.

3. Reading teachers should be cognizant of personal biases toward ethnic minority students.

Many teachers, regardless of their ethnic identities, have built-in biases against ethnic minority students (Gay, 1974; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1973). Also, at times, teachers may have lower reading expectations of ethnic minority students (Entwisle and Webster, 1972; Rist, 1970). Lower expectations by reading teachers when coupled with the linguistic and cultural differences of ethnic minority students can effectuate lower reading performance (Enochs, 1978.) Teachers may confuse cultural differences as motivational or cognitive deficits. For example, a Native American student who does not like competitive learning tasks may be exhibiting a cultural orientation toward cooperation rather than "laziness" or "passiveness."

One way of overcoming ethnic group biases is to study a groups' history, literature, or language. These disciplines can provide new knowledge and insight into a group's culture. Teachers are encouraged to become ethnically literate. Spache (1969) analyzed studies which tested the effectiveness of instructional approaches, language experience approach, phonics approach, etc., and found all of the approaches were helpful for teaching reading. The critical factor for reading achievement was the teacher's attitude toward the learning capabilities of students. If the teacher has a built-in bias against the academic or reading capabilities of

ethnic minority students, then that bias may be reflected in the lower performance of ethnic minority students.

Multiethnic Reading Resources

The following lists are intended to assist reading and language arts teachers locate basic multiethnic reading resources. Many other excellent resources have been excluded. Ultimately, local libraries, curriculum centers, museums, and other educational depositories may prove more helpful. I encourage teachers to exhaust local and state resources as a first attempt to locate multiethnic materials.

Many communities have educational resources that are untapped. Civic organizations, church organizations, community action programs, and of course, people. For examples, ethnic minority organizations such as Urban League or the G. I. Forum readily assist teachers seeking reading materials or resources for Blacks and Mexican Americans. People in the community may have unique hobbies or interests that could be utilized. I knew a drug store clerk who could identify "wonder drugs" and medicines originally developed by Native Americans.

Guides, Scales, Checklists for Evaluating Reading Materials

Rosenberg, Max "Criteria for Evaluating the Treatment of Minority Groups and Warner in Textbooks and Other Learning Materials, "Educational Leadership, 31 (November 1973), pp. 108-109.

Marcus, L. The Treatment of Minorities in Secondary Testbooks New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1961.

Sexism and Racism in Popular Basal Readers. New York: Racism and Sexism Recourse Center, 1974.

Banks, James. "A Content Analysis of the Black American in Textbooks," Social Education, 33 (December 1969) pp. 955-958.

"10 Quick Ways to Analyze Books for Racism and Sexism," Interracial Books for Children Bulletin 5, (1974).

"Chicano Culture in Children's Literature, a Survey of 200 Books," Interacial Books for Children Bulletin 5, (1974).

"100 Books about Puerto Ricans: A Study in Racism, Sexism, and Colonialism," Interracial Digest 1 (1975).

Multiethnic Publications

Banks, James. Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1975.

Concepts, strategies, and materials for teaching about Asians, Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans. Contains original, well-researched data and an excellent multiethnic resource unit.

Boyer, James and Boyer, Joe, Eds. Curriculum and Instruction After Desegregation. Manhattan, Kansas: AG Press, 1975.

Provides framework and creative ideas for teaching about Asian Americans, Black Americans, Native Americans, Spanish-speaking Americans, and Women.

Cortes, Carlos. Understanding You and Them: Tips for Teaching About Ethnicity. Boulder: Social Science Consortium, 1976.

Basic information on ethnicity. A "how to approach ethnicity book," with plenty of examples and suggestions for improving intergroup relations in schools.

Griffin, Louise. Multi-ethnic Books for Young Children. Washington, D. C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Ave. N. W., 1972.

Comprehensive annotated bibliography of children's literature on Native Americans, Appalachians, Blacks, Eskimoes, Hawaiians, Filipinos, Asians, Jews; Inter-Ethnic and Adult Books also reviewed. Current prices and publishers' addresses provided.

Multiethnic Literature. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972.

Houghton Mifflin publishes anthologies subtitled as Afro-American Authors, Asian-American Authors, American Indian Authors and Mexican American Authors. They are original stories of good quality. Could be used at intermediate grades or adapted for primary grade readers.

Commercial Organizations that publish multiethnic teaching materials:

Asian American Studies Center
Box 24A43
Los Angeles, CA 94104

(Ethnic studies materials on Asian American experience.)

Chicano Studies Center
University of California
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024

(Chicano ethnic studies material. Also publishes Aztlan, foremost research journal on Mexican Americans.)

Council on Interracial Books for Children
1841 Broadway
New York, NY 10023

(Publishes critiques of children's literature on sexism and racism; their monthly Bulletin filled with excellent multiethnic materials and resources.)

Indian Historical Society
1451 Masonic Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94117

(Native American curriculum materials. Good non-stereotypic children's literature about Native Americans.)

Johnson Publishing Company
820 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605

(Ebony, Jr. and other materials on Black Americans.)

Puerto Rican Research and Resource Center
1529 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

(Good basic materials on Puerto Ricans.)

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
315 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10016

(Materials, films, film strips on racism, prejudice, stereotyping.)

Professional organization's partial multiethnic listings:

International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road
Newark, Delaware 19711

Doris C. Ching. Reading and the Bilingual Child.

Thonis, Eleanor. Literacy for America's Spanish Speaking Children.

Whipple and Black. Reading for Children Without-- Our Disadvantaged Youth.

Garcia, Ricardo L. "Mexican Americans Learn Through Language Experience Approach," Reading Teacher, 28 (December 1974), 301-305.

Tanyzer, Harold and Jean Karl, eds. Reading, Children's Books and Our Pluralistic Society (Also, ERIC: ED 071 036, 95p.)

National Council for the Social Studies
1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Curriculum Guidelines for Multiethnic Education, NCSS Position Statement, 1976.

Teaching Ethnic Studies, James Banks, ed., 43rd Yearbook, 1973.

Teaching About Life in the City, Richard Wisniewski, ed., 42nd Yearbook, 1972.

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road
Urbana, Illinois 61801

"Focus 1: Realism for Ethnic Groups." Language Arts, 53 (March 1976) pp. 236-286.

Garcia, Ricardo L. "Overview on Chicano Folklore," English Journal, (March 1976).

Kelley, Ernece, B., ed., Searching for America, 1972.

Larson, Richard L., ed. Student's Right to Their Own Language, 1972.

NCTE : Task Force on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English "Criteria for Teaching Materials in Reading and Literature," 1970.

Reed, Linda. ERIC/RCS Report: Multiethnic Literature and the Elementary School Curriculum. Language Arts, 53 (March 1976) pp. 256-261.

Phi Delta Kappa Education Foundation
Eight and Union, Box 789
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Banks, James A. Multiethnic Education: Practices and Promises, fastback no. 87, 1977.

Garcia, Ricardo Fostering a Pluralistic Society Through Multiethnic Education, fastback no. 107

Guide for Improving Public School Practices in Human Rights, 1975.

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Enoch, Romily. "The Relationship Between Indian and Non-Indian Teachers' Perceptions of Indian First-Graders' Achievement in Reading." BIA Education Research Bulletin 6 (January 1978) pp. 23-28.

Entwisle, D. R. and Webster, M., "Raising Children's Performance Expectations: A Classroom Demonstration." Social Science Research. 1 (January 1972) pp. 147-158.

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Gay, Geneva Differential Dyadic Interactions of Black and White Teachers with Black and White Pupils in Recently Desegegregated Social Studies Classrooms: A Function of Teacher and Pupil Ethnicety, Project no. 2 F 113, Washington, D. C: Office of Education, January 1974.

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John, V. and Berney, T. D. "Analysis of Story Retelling as a Measure of the Effects of Ethnic Content in Stories," The Disadvantaged Child, J. Hellmuth, Ed., pp. 257-287. Seattle: Special Child Publishers, 1968.

McKay, F. Y. in Sara G. Zimet, Print and Prejudice, p. 62. London: United Kingdom Reading Association, 1976.

Miel, Alice and Kiester, Edwin, Jr., The Shortchanged Children of Suburbia. New York: Institute of Human Relations Press, 1973.

Molnar, Joe. Graciela: A Mexican American Child Tells Her Story. New York: Franklin Watts, 1972.

Rist, R. C. "Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education." Harvard Educational Review, 1970, 40, pp. 411-451.

Rivilin, Alice. Inequalities in the Educational Experience of Black and White Americans. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1977.

Robinson, Alan H. "Reading Instruction and Research: In Historical Perspective," Reading and Writing Instruction in the United States: Historical Trends, Alan Robinson, Ed., pp. 44-58. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1977.

Spache, George and Spache, Evelyn. Reading in the Elementary School. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969.

U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. Teachers and Students, Report V. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, March, 1973.

Windham, T. L. in Sara G. Zimet, Print and Prejudice, p. 62. London: United Kingdom Reading Association, 1976.

Yep, Lawrence. Child of the Owl. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.

Yee, Albert H. "Myopic Perceptions and Textbooks: Chinese American's Search for Identity." Journal of Social Issues 29 (February 1973) pp. 99-113

Zimet, Sara Goodman. Print and Prejudice. London: United Kingdom Reading Association - Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1976.

Zimet, S. G. and Camp, B. W., "Favorite Books of First Graders from City and Suburb" Elementary School Journal 75 (1974) pp. 191-196.